

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAB-01

CU-04 OMB-01 /073 W

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R 081751Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6975

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

PANCANAL

USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 1635

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR PN

SUBJ: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: TORRIJOS DISCUSSES WITH COLOMBIAN RADIO

1. HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS, IN A RADIO INTERVIEW MAR 7 WITH THE COLOMBIAN RADIO CHAIN TODELAR, CHARACTERIZED NEGOTIATION AS ONE FORM OF (NATIONAL) LIBERATION, BUT ADDED THAT VIOLENCE WOULD BE PANAMA'S ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO RECUPERATION OF FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CANAL ZONE SHOULD PEACEFUL MEANS FAIL. MARCH 8 LOCAL PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE TREATMENT TO YESTERDAY'S FORTY MINUTE RADIO INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS.

2. THE INTERVIEW WAS A MIXTURE OF TORRIJOS' VIEWS AND STATEMENTS ON THE CANAL ISSUE, MANY OF WHICH WERE REPEATS OF EARLIER PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. TORRIJOS STATED, FOR INSTANCE, THAT PANAMA AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE SWORN BEFORE THE NEW GENERATION OF PANAMANIAN AND THE YOUNG OFFICERS OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL TO RECOVER FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CANAL, AND WHILE TO COMPLY WITH THAT OATH VIOLENT MEANS ARE A LICIT OPTION, THAT CHOICE IS THE COURT OF LAST RESORT. HE ADDED THAT NO ARMED FORCES IN THE WORLD CAN OCCUPY A COUNTRY THAT IS FIRMLY
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OPPOSED TO THAT OCCUPATION.

3. HE ALSO REMARKED THAT SO FAR HE HAS RESTRAINED THE STUDENTS FROM MARTYRING THEMSELVES OVER PANAMA'S CANAL "CAUSE".

4. NOTING THAT PANAMA'S CAMPAIGN TO INTERNATIONALIZE HER CANAL ASPIRATIONS HAD ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS, TORRIJOS CITED AS PROOF THE UPCOMING AMPHYICTYONIC CONGRESS (SLATED FOR JUNE 20-23 HERE) FROM WHICH PANAMA HOPES TO EXTRACT YET ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF REGIONAL SOLIDARITY ON THIS ISSUE, AND IN THE SAME CONTEXT MENTIONED THE MARCH 14 VISIT OF YUGOSLAVIA'S JOSIP BROZ TITO.

5. IN COMMENTING ON DOMESTIC POLITICS AND HIS TENURE IN THEM, TORRIJOS SAID HE "INTENDS TO BE INDISPENSIBLE FOR THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME". HE SET NO TERM TO THAT PERIOD, HOWEVER.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS INTERVIEW SIGNIFIES ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CANAL NEGOTIATIONS OR PANAMANIAN DOMESTIC POLICY.

JORDEN

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